

REMARKS

The Official Action mailed December 13, 2005, has been received and its contents carefully noted. This response is filed within three months of the mailing date of the Official Action and therefore is believed to be timely without extension of time. Also, filed concurrently herewith is a *Request for Continued Examination*. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that this response is being timely filed.

The Applicants note with appreciation the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on July 15, 2003; October 14, 2003; and September 28, 2005.

Claims 1-27 were pending in the present application prior to the above amendment. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16-18, 20-22, 24, 25 and 27 have been amended to better recite the features of the present invention, and new claims 28-44 have been added to recite additional protection to which the Applicants are entitled. Claims 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23 and 26 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner (page 2, Paper No. 20051211). Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16-18, 20-22, 24, 25 and 27-44 are currently elected, of which claims 1-4, 28 and 34 are independent. For the reasons set forth in detail below, all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Paragraph 5 of the Official Action repeats the objections raised in paragraph 5 of the Official Action mailed June 28, 2005, regarding claims 4, 17, 20, 25 and 27. The Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the comments at page 8 of the Applicants' *Amendment* filed September 28, 2005 (received by OIPE September 30, 2005) and the corresponding amendments to claims 4, 17, 20, 25 and 27. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Paragraph 7 of the Official Action provisionally rejects claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16-18, 20-22 and 24 under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1-12 of copending Application Serial No. 10/740,437. Paragraph 8 of the Official Action provisionally rejects claims 25 and 27 under the doctrine of obviousness-type


double patenting over the combination of claims 1-12 of the '437 application and U.S. Patent No. 6,127,199 to Inoue et al.

In response to this rejection, a *Terminal Disclaimer* is submitted herewith. Upon filing of this *Terminal Disclaimer*, the claims of the present invention are now believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness-type double patenting rejections are requested.

New claims 28-44 have been added to recite additional protection to which the Applicants are entitled. The Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 28-44 are in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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